

CLAIMS

1. A method of disseminating to a participant an indication that an item accessible by the participant via a network is of current interest, comprising:
 - receiving in real time an indication that the item is of current interest;
 - 5 processing the indication; and
 - informing the participant that the item is of current interest.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein processing the indication comprises determining an intensity value for the indication based on at least one attribute of the indication, the intensity value representing the weight that will be given to the indication.
- 10 3. The method of claim 2 wherein processing the indication further comprises calculating an intensity rank for the item based at least in part on the intensity value of the indication, the intensity rank indicating the level of current interest of the item relative to other items.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
 - 15 associating the item with a category of interest to which the item relates;
 - receiving from the participant a selection of one or more categories of interest to the participant;
 - identifying all items of current interest within the selected categories;
 - ranking the identified items of current interest; and
 - 20 sending to the participant a list of items of current interest in rank order, the list including at least one of the identified items of current interest;

wherein the ranking of each item is based, at least in part, on the level of current interest of each item relative to other items as indicated at least in part by the intensity rank.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving a comment relating to the
5 item.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving data identifying the source of the indication.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising associating the item with a category of interest to which the item relates.
- 10 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the item is associated with a category of interest identified by the source of the indication of current interest.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the item is one of a plurality of items of current interest, further comprising:
 - associating the item with a category of interest to which the item relates;
 - 15 receiving from the participant a selection of one or more categories of interest to the participant; and
 - identifying all items of current interest within the selected categories.
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
 - ranking the identified items of current interest; and
 - 20 sending to the participant a list of items of current interest in rank order, the list including at least one of the identified items of current interest.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the ranking of each item is based, at least in part, on the extent to which the categories selected by the participant match the categories associated with the item.

12. The method of claim 9, further comprising receiving an indication of the

5 participant's sensitivity with respect to each category of interest to the participant, whereby an indication of a relatively low level of sensitivity indicates the participant does not want to be informed that an item is of current interest unless one or more indications have been received that indicate a relatively high level of current interest with respect to an item in the corresponding category and an indication of a relatively high level of
10 sensitivity indicates the participant wants to be informed that an item is of current interest even if only one indication indicating a relatively low level of current interest has been received with respect to an item in the corresponding category.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

ranking the identified items of current interest; and

15 sending to the participant a ranked list including at least one of the identified items of current interest;

wherein the ranking of each item is based, at least in part, on the sensitivity of the participant with respect to each category associated with the item.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the item is identified by a Uniform Resource

20 Locator (URL).

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing data relating to the indication in a database.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining the weight to be given to the indication.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the indication is received automatically if a participant accesses the item.

5 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing one or more participants with an interface to send an indication that an item is of current interest.

19. A system for disseminating to participants an indication that an item accessible by the participant via a network is of current interest, comprising:

10 a computer configured to receive in real time an indication that the item is of current interest; process the indication; and inform the participant that the item is of current interest; and

a database, associated with the computer, configured to store data relating to the item.

15 20. A computer program product for disseminating to a participant an indication that an item accessible by the participant via a network is of current interest, the computer program product being embodied in a computer readable medium and comprising computer instructions for:

20 receiving in real time an indication that the item is of current interest;
processing the indication; and
informing the participant that the item is of current interest.